DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 089 144 CE 001 580

AUTHOR Douglas, Stephen A.
TITLE The Continuing Education Unit.
INSTITUTION Missouri Univ., Rolla.
PUB DATE Jun 73
NOTE 11p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Education; *Adult Education Programs; *Noncredit Courses; Post Secondary Education; Program Planning; Recordkeeping; Speeches
IDENTIFIERS *Continuing Education Unit

ABSTRACT

Rapid change and the explosion of technology have created a need for continual updating in education. The Continuing Education Unit (CEU) appears to be fulfilling these needs of the individual learner, the college and university, the professional society, the licensing board, the accrediting organizations, the employer and many other groups. The greatest rationale for the CEU is the ease with which it may be applied to existing programs of continuing education. At the University of Missouri-Rolla, computerized program recording and efficient data storage and retrieval of the CEU's are utilized and these units have been incorporated into a permanent student record system similar to the one presently used for credit courses. The real value of the CEU is that it is intended to have merit or utility only in such instances that it meets the needs of a particular clientele group. The key to the success of the CEU will be found in its discriminating use. While it is basically a quantifying mechanism, the administrative process with which the CEU is implemented can and should provide the quality control factors to make it a meaningful measurement. (MW)

ED 089144

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

6/20/73

THE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT

University of Missouri - Rolla

Stephen A. Douglas
Assistant Dean, Extension
and Continuing Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

I have been asked to speak to you today about the development and implementation of the C.E.U. or continuing education unit. This is no small undertaking because the C.E.U. appears to be gaining national recognition and acceptance as the standard unit of measurement for continuing education.

One problem that has been faced throughout the years has been the need for a system allowing the orderly recognition and reporting process for the non-credit learning efforts of the individual and the programming efforts of institutions. The National Task Force on the Continuing Education Unit was created in 1968 to help solve this problem. From this beginning, a new concept for recording non-credit continuing education activities has been developed for the use of industries, professional societies, accrediting agencies and similar educational organizations. It is called the continuing education unit and is defined as 10 contact hours of participation in an organized continuing education experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction. Note that the Continuing Education Unit is decimally related to the instructional hour. This simple procedure should prove to be a convenience when assigning the appropriate number of continuing education units to representative continuing education experiences, regardless of length or format.

The National Task Force held a meeting in the summer of 1970 to initiate a pilot project on the C.E.U. Invited participants were requested to develop

AE 001580

a permanent record system and to evaluate the suggested guidelines for implementation of this unit of measurement. Dr. G. Edwin Lorey, Dean of Extension and Continuing Education, represented the University of Missouri - Rolla at the meeting.

Let's examine together why the C.E.U. appears to be fulfilling a long term need of the individual learner, the college and university, the professional society, the licensing board, the accrediting organization, the employer, and many other groups in our society today who have an interest in this subject.

We are living in a period of rapid change. The explosion of technology has severely tested the capability of most institutions of higher learning to keep individuals updated in the various professions. The need for continuous updating and other forms of self-renewal has become a concern for individuals and employers of personnel at all levels of skill, whether publicly or privately engaged.

This is an era of great dependence upon life-long learning and the pursuit of self-renewal whether these educational objectives are carried out on the job or exclusively within a profession. The greatest rationale for the continuing education unit is the ease with which it may be applied to existing programs of continuing education. It is easily and immediately capable of being applied at any recognizable level of continuing education, from post-secondary to post-doctoral participation in highly specialized and individualized professional learning experiences.

There is a great need today for the professional, the skilled worker or technician and the general adult to be able to bring to bear a new enlightenment upon the broad social, economic and technical problems of the day.

Parallel with the need for an individual to remain abreast of the sweeping changes affecting his job and his skills is the need for continuing education that requires the individual's formal education to be continued throughout a lifetime.

There has been a marked increase in the variety and multiplicity of informal educational channels by which an individual may further his knowledge. Short Courses, conferences, institutes, seminars and correspondence study have been some of the primary non-credit or informal instructional forms created to satisfy the needs of the individual. The forms of instruction have had no uniform duration, timing or unit of measurement, nor have they always been sharply targeted to the population.

Equally frustrating has been the fact that too little recognition is given participants - whether students or instructors - in continuing education programs. Meaningful check points and career goals comparable to the established degrees and professional licenses are lacking in the variety of extension and continuing education offerings presently available to the individual.

Until recently, there had been no adequate means of measuring the amount of non-credit activity, except in terms of the number of individuals participating in such activities, or the academic level of such activities, except to the extent that elementary, secondary or higher educational institutions may have administered the programs.

Right now, our nation's employers have many millions of professional level employees and have special needs for measuring educational activities, not only for hiring purposes but also for promotional criteria.

The C.E.U. also applies for all formats of continuing education as long as there is a legitimate sponsor and a knowledgeable and responsible person associated with the organization and conduct of the learning experience. The system of recognition that follows depends upon the skill and dedication of each responsible person to establish the appropriate number of C.E.U.'s to be attached to the program. This task need be neither as difficult nor as uncertain as it may seem at first encounter. As with the levels and format, the continuing education unit is also completely universal with respect to both the range of the instructional content and the qualification of the clientele group for whom the experience is intended. Someone has said that the value of the continuing education unit lies wholly in the eyes of the beholder.

The continuing education unit may appear to be so universally available and applicable that it could be in danger of losing all of it's intended meaning. The real value of the C.E.U. is that it is intended to have merit or utility only in such instances that it meets the needs or specifications of a particular clientele group. The learning experience may serve to you the purpose of advancing the level of general education or imparting essential new information.

I talked with Dr. Warren G. Ball (American Medical Association) approximately six weeks ago. He indicated that the A.M.A. had developed a mechanism known as the "Physicians Recognition Award." This award is based on the successful completion of certain units of continuing education. They have now found

that certain developments within the profession are taking on additional emphasis because of the possibility of implementing continuing education requirements for the relicensure of physicians. Some of the state medical societies have actually implemented a requirement that continuing education is necessary for continued membership in the society. He indicated that it becomes increasingly important to develop a uniform unit of identification and recognition of continuing education that can be used, not only as it applies to the medical profession, but all of the other allied health professions that are associated with it, and in many other areas of education as well. Dr. Ball indicated that the voluntary approach through state and local medical societies were in process of implementation.

There are a large number of groups in the country for whom the C.E.U. has potential use. Each of these user groups, such as yourself, has it's own membership requirements and continuing education objectives. Thus the opportunity is ever present for the evaluation of continuing education opportunities by these groups. Judgements can be made whether or not the particular continuing education unit is pertinent to their immediate need. I feel that a uniform procedural format must be followed if the system is to gain the insight needed to be of value throughout the United States. You might ask what are some specific objectives which the application of the continuing education unit will fulfill. I believe it will:

1. Encourage long-range educational goals and lifelong learning as a process of continuing education.

2. Make the pursuit of knowledge more attractive as a way of personal and professional development.
3. Permit and encourage the typical adult student to marshall and utilize a host of continuing education resources to serve his particular needs.
4. Systematize the recording and reporting system for participation in non-credit continuing education.
5. Provide a uniform system for accumulating quantitative data on participation in continuing education activities.
6. Permit the accumulation, updating and transfer of the continuing education record of an individual participant.

I believe the following questions must be answered in the affirmative before consideration can be given to awarding units.

1. Does the program meet the requirements of being an organized continuing education experience?
2. Does the program have qualified instruction and direction to assure that the educational objectives will be fulfilled?
3. Will a record of the units awarded be of value to the participants?

At the University of Missouri - Rolla, these units have been incorporated into a permanent student record system similar to the one presently used by the registrar's office for credit courses. These continuing education units carry no credit for college degree programs and are a separate and distinct operation from the university credit programs. Individual student records are programmed for computer input and can be retrieved in the form of a single or cumulative transcript along with accompanying letters of transmittal.

We felt that the uniform system for recording an individual's progress of maintaining currency in his profession would be of extreme value, not only to the adult student, but to his employer, once this concept became known. Further, there were some advantages in using the continuing education unit for total institutional reporting.

The current procedure of the continuing education unit project at Rolla is as follows: The appropriate C.E.U. value is assigned to every non-credit extension activity by the program planning committee. This committee is composed of the representative academic faculty, the coordinator for the program, and the representative of the clientele group which is to be served by the program. For the usual teaching situations (short courses, non-credit courses, conferences, etc.) there is no problem in assigning the number of C.E.U.'s for each program, since the definition of the C.E.U. is sufficient. For less formal modes of instruction(independent study), the C.E.U. value assigned relates to the number of instructional hours required in a conventional classroom situation to achieve the same degree of knowledge transfer. This value is a judgemental value determined by the program planning committee.

The program director, working with an extension coordinator, completes a program planning form. Most of the information on this form is used for internal management, including the teaching staff, proposed budget and source of funds. The remainder of the information is intended for C.E.U. application. The data elements which are included are: name of course or program, program description, academic level, starting and ending dates, format, and the number of continuing education units assigned. Also included is the Office of Education HEGIS code

which uses the WICHE program classification system. The form is completed, it is signed by the program director and in turn by the chairman of the academic department responsible for the program, the school or college dean, the Dean of Extension, following the normal route for administration approval.

The awarding of C.E.U.'s to individual students participating in Extension programs requires a formal registration. This form is completed in the normal block computer style and includes all the student information you might desire plus the social security number. Upon completion of the program, the program director signs this form if the student is to be awarded the appropriate C.E.U.'s. We primarily key the retrieval to the social security number. The ultimate value and/or utility of the C.E.U. will be determined by the user (employer, accrediting agency or other institution) who is evaluating the continuing education progress of an individual. We feel that the user should place his own value on the educational return from someone attending a large conference or meeting. For our C.E.U. program recording, we are presently using an IBM 360/50 computer with a direct access device, either a disc or drum. Each disc pack is capable of storing complete information for 150,000 students. The program is written in PL1, but may readily be changed at nominal cost into another programming language. We give one transcript to the student as part of the cost of the program. We have included what we hope is enough information to enable the user to make an intelligent evaluation of the continuing education progress of an individual. If desired, the computer will supply a transcript showing a cumulative record to date of all the courses in which the individual has been enrolled. We have had discussions with the registrars of the four campuses and the Institutional Research

Personnel, relative to the administrative responsibility for recording and reporting student participation in credit and non-credit programs. The present consensus is that the registrars will continue to have responsibility for credit course transcripts for all students while the Extension Division will maintain the records for non-credit activities. This decision is not at all critical for the success of total institutional reporting since all data storage and retrieval could be handled satisfactorily through one administrative unit. In summary, beyond the knowledge and skills required through participation in non-degree programs, the C.E.U. will be of significant value to both participants and employers to have available a permanent record of the individual's effort to make education a continuing process. Likewise, such records may provide an individual with the means of demonstration to a prospective employer, his efforts to keep abreast of the latest developments in his field of endeavor. By using the continuing education unit, with a standard format for interpretation, the individual's record can be reviewed and an evaluation made based on what is recorded on the transcript.

Establishing and implementing a new system for program reporting and student participation involves a tremendous amount of time, effort and paper-work. For many years we have needed a much more precise and uniform method for recording Extension and Continuing Education program activities in such a way that an individual could make use of the reported information as an evaluative procedure in the continuing education progress of an individual.

By virtue of awarding C.E. units, the sponsoring institution or organization must also accept responsibility for establishing and maintaining a permanent record of all such units awarded. Records should be available on a permanent basis, whether by individual or by continuing education activity and such records may be expected to be queried from time to time by the so-called "user sector" of continuing education.

Overheads for Slides:

1. Program Planning Form - Budget
2. Formal Registration Forms
3. Format Layout of Course Information
4. Transcript
5. Cumulative Transcript

I believe it should become the policy of all proponents of continuing education to encourage professional societies, certifying agencies, recruitment and placement activities, employers, personnel managers, counsellors, licensing boards and similar individuals and organizations to establish standards and incentives for personal and professional development.

Such standards and incentives should be in terms of continuing education units to be acquired over a given period of time for particular forms of reward and recognition.

Being open ended, the incentives make continuing education a life-long quest, both for individuals and for user groups. Each user group will establish and regulate its own requirements for the maintenance of proficiency in the particular clientele field over which it has purview or jurisdiction.

The key to the success and usefulness of the C.E.U. will be found in its discriminating use. While the C.E.U. is basically a quantifying mechanism, the administrative process with which it is implemented can and should provide the quality control factors to make the C.E.U. a meaningful measurement.

It is anticipated that the C.E.U. will go through a process of development and refinement as its use becomes more widespread.

It is obvious that in this day of rapid and massive change, the average individual must continue to learn if he is to remain an effective, efficiently functioning human resource.

It is obvious that we must provide a way that the adult learner can measure and accumulate and be recognized for the wide range of learning, participation and experiences. The C.E.U. provides a way to do just that.